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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 1 January 2008 to 30 June 2008

I. Introduction

1. The present report gives an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) during the past six months pursuant to the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 350 (1974) and extended in subsequent resolutions, most recently resolution 1788 (2007) of 14 December 2007.

II. Situation in the area and activities of the Force

2. During the period under review the ceasefire in the Israel-Syria sector was maintained and the UNDOF area of operation remained generally quiet. UNDOF supervised the area of separation by means of fixed positions and patrols to ensure that the military forces of either party were excluded from it. The Force also carried out fortnightly inspections of equipment and force levels in the areas of limitation. Liaison officers from the party concerned accompanied the inspection teams. As in the past, both sides denied inspection teams access to some of their positions and imposed restrictions on the Force's freedom of movement. During the period under review, UNDOF adapted its operational activities to the continuing Israel Defense Forces (IDF) training activities in the area of limitation on the Alpha side and Syrian civilian settlement growth in proximity to the ceasefire line in the southern part of the area of separation. During the same period, both sides continued to construct new, and renovate existing defensive positions in the respective areas of limitation. Israeli national Customs officials continue to operate periodically at the IDF post at the UNDOF crossing gate between the Israeli-occupied Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both parties have limited the movement of UNDOF supplies through the Alpha and Bravo gates.

3. The Force continued to assist the International Committee of the Red Cross with the passage of persons through the area of separation. During the past six months, UNDOF assisted in the crossing of 19 students and 7 civilians. UNDOF also provided medical treatment to 204 civilians.

4. In the area of operation, especially in the area of separation, mines continued to pose a threat to UNDOF personnel and local inhabitants. Owing to the long-term

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presence of the mines and the deterioration of their detonation systems, this threat has increased. UNDOF continued to carry out operational mine clearance. It remained available to support the United Nations Children's Fund in activities to promote mine awareness among the civilian population.

5. The Force Commander and his staff maintained close contact with the military authorities of Israel and of the Syrian Arab Republic. Both sides generally cooperated with the Force in the execution of its tasks.

6. As at 19 May 2008, UNDOF comprised 1,047 troops, from Austria (381), Canada (2), Croatia (2), India (189), Japan (30), Poland (348) and Slovakia (95). A total of 15 personnel were employed by Japan as a national support element. In addition, 75 military observers from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) assisted the Force in carrying out its tasks.

III. Financial aspects

7. By its resolution 61/287, the General Assembly appropriated the amount of $39.6 million for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008. The proposed budget for UNDOF for the financial period commencing on 1 July 2008 amounts to $45.7 million, equivalent to $3.8 million per month, and is currently under consideration by the General Assembly. Should the Council decide to extend the mandate of the Force beyond 30 June 2008, as recommended in paragraph 12 below, the cost of maintaining the Force would be limited to the monthly amounts to be approved by the General Assembly.

8. As at 30 April 2008, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNDOF special account for the period from the inception of the Force to that date amounted to $14.9 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $2.3 billion. As at 30 April 2008, amounts owed to troop contributors for UNDOF totalled $2.3 million. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the period up to 29 February 2008 and 31 December 2007, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IV. Implementation of Security Council resolution 338 (1973)

9. The Security Council, when deciding in its resolution 1788 (2007) to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months, until 30 June 2008, also called upon the parties concerned to implement immediately its resolution 338 (1973) and requested the Secretary-General to submit, at the end of the period, a report on developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement that resolution. The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, in particular the efforts undertaken at various levels to implement resolution 338 (1973), was addressed in the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 61/26 and 61/27 (A/62/327).

V. Observations

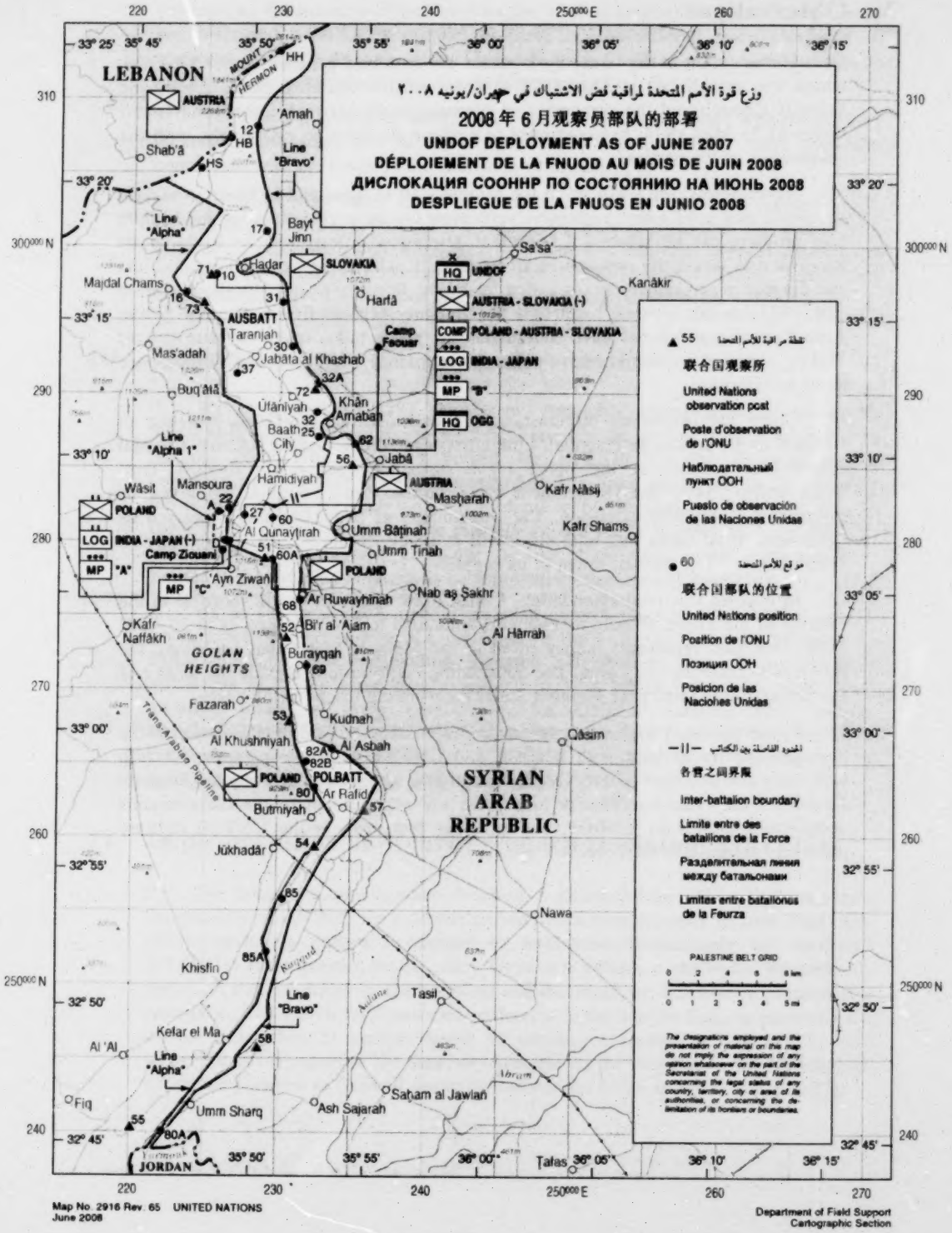
10. The situation in the Israel-Syria sector has remained generally quiet. UNDOF, which was established in May 1974 to supervise the ceasefire called for by the Security Council and the agreement on disengagement between Syrian and Israeli forces of 31 May 1974, has continued to perform its function effectively, with the cooperation of the parties.

11. Nevertheless, the situation in the Middle East is tense and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached. I hope that determined efforts will be made by all concerned to tackle the problem in all its aspects, with a view to arriving at a just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973). In this context, I welcome the announcement confirming that the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel have started indirect peace talks, under the auspices of Turkey, aimed at a comprehensive peace in accordance with the Madrid Conference terms of reference.

12. Under the prevailing circumstances, I consider the continued presence of UNDOF in the area to be essential. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 31 December 2008. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has given its assent to the proposed extension. The Government of Israel has also expressed its agreement. It is hoped that both sides will make efforts to ease the limitations on Force mobility and the movement of its supplies.

13. In making this recommendation, I must draw attention to the shortfall in the funding of the Force. Unpaid assessments amounted to $14.9 million as at 30 April 2008. That sum represents money owed to the Member States that contribute the troops who make up the Force. The outstanding contributions impede the ability of the Secretariat to reimburse Member States contributing troops to the Force.

14. In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to Major General Wolfgang Jilke and to the men and women serving with UNDOF and UNTSO. They have performed with efficiency and devotion to duty the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Governments contributing troops to UNDOF, and to those that provide the UNTSO military observers assigned to the Force.


وزع قوة الأمم المتحدة لمراقبة فض الاشتباك في حوران/يونيه ٢٠٠٨
2008 年 6 月观察员部队的部署
UNDOF DEPLOYMENT AS OF JUNE 2007
DÉPLOIEMENT DE LA FNUOD AU MOIS DE JUIN 2008
ДИСЛОКАЦИЯ СООННР ПО СОСТОЯНИЮ НА ИЮНЬ 2008
DESPLIEGUE DE LA FNUOS EN JUNIO 2008
LEBANON
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
JORDAN
GOLAN HEIGHTS
AUSTRIA
SLOVAKIA
POLAND
POLBATT
AUSBATT
HQ UNDOF
AUSTRIA - SLOVAKIA (-)
COMP POLAND - AUSTRIA - SLOVAKIA
LOG INDIA - JAPAN
MP "B"
HQ OGG
LOG INDIA - JAPAN (-)
Camp Zlousni
MP "A"
MP "C"
Camp Faouar
Line "Alpha"
Line "Alpha 1"
Line "Bravo"
United Nations observation post
Poste d'observation de l'ONU
Наблюдательный пункт ООН
Puesto de observación de las Naciones Unidas
United Nations position
Position de l'ONU
Позиция ООН
Posicion de las Naciones Unidas
Inter-battalion boundary
Limite entre des bataillons de la Force
Разделительная линия между батальонами
Limites entre batallones de la Feurza
PALESTINE BELT GRID
The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.
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Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section